

Chapter 2

Community Baselines

Community Overview

Lynchburg, Virginia is a city which remembers its past while focusing on the future - a vibrant central city fostering a strong sense of community, economic opportunity for all our citizens and responsive, results-oriented local government.

In October 1786, the Virginia General Assembly granted John Lynch a charter for a town. The 45 acres granted for the town was his land. Lynchburg was incorporated as a town in 1805 and as a city in 1852. From April 6 to 10, 1865, Lynchburg served as the capital of Virginia. Under Governor William Smith, the executive and legislative branches of the Commonwealth moved to Lynchburg for the few days between the fall of Richmond and the fall of the Confederacy. Located in Central Virginia, Lynchburg was named for its founder, John Lynch, who at the age of 17 started a ferry service across the James River in 1757.

The current charter for the City of Lynchburg is derived from Chapter 343 of the Acts of Assembly of 1928, approved by the General Assembly on March 28, 1928 and has been amended numerous times since then. It can be found on the City's website at www.lynchburgva.gov.

Today, based on population, the City of Lynchburg is the eleventh largest city and the twenty-fifth largest municipality, based on population, in the Commonwealth of Virginia with a population of 75,568 and an incorporated area of 50.25 miles. The daytime population increases significantly during "normal" business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., regularly reaching 120,000 people. Additionally, as the home to three residential colleges and universities, an additional 16,000 people inhabit the City from August to May of each year.

The city has a wide range of occupancies including high-rise, commercial/industrial and residences. It has real property with an assessed valuation estimated at nearly \$4.9 billion dollars.

Table 2.1 City of Lynchburg Demographics

City of Lynchburg	
Population ¹	65,269
Area	50.25
Real Property Value ²	\$4,972,300,500

Governance Model of the Authority Having Jurisdiction

The City of Lynchburg operates under a council/manager form of government. The City Council develops and adopts legislation and policies to direct the City organization, but employs a City Manager to manage and oversee all City personnel and operations to carry forward council's direction.

Through popular elections on even numbered years, Lynchburg citizens regularly choose the seven members of City Council. Elected to staggered four-year terms of office, City Council is elected on either an at-large (3 members) or ward (4 members) representational basis. From among their group, the elected City Council members, in turn, choose by simple majority vote a President or Mayor, who serves a two-year term.

Appointed by the City Council, the City Manager serves as the chief executive officer of the municipal corporation. The duties of this office are prescribed by the Charter of the City of Lynchburg, and include the following responsibilities: appointment of department directors; daily execution of contracts on behalf of the City Government; preparation of an annual budget; reporting to City Council concerning the financial condition of City; and all other duties as prescribed by law, ordinance or resolution of City Council.

The City Manager is responsible to the City Council for the effective operation of all government functions. Since the early 1990's, the City has been actively engaged in high-performance development, which has resulted in innovative community/city partnerships; customer service improvements; regional visioning; and the increased use of technology in service delivery. A direct outcome of this work has been the development of a results-oriented strategy for government that

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2010.

² City of Lynchburg Assessors Office, January 1, 2011.

will translate the vision and goals of City Council into an internal strategic plan that provides focus and direction for the organization.

Fire protection in Lynchburg was first organized on May of 1883. The department, Lynchburg's first, is now known as the Lynchburg Fire & EMS Department and has been in continuous operations since that time. The department began providing emergency medical services in 1975 and continues to provide this service today. In October of 1997, the department's Technical Rescue Team was officially established and in latter part of 1999, the department's Hazardous Materials Team was officially established. The fire department earned international accreditation in September 2005.

The City Manager appoints the Fire Chief, who is responsible for organizing and administering the department. The department consists of 186 full time equivalent (FTE) positions, including 177 uniformed and 9 civilian personnel. Additionally, two Information Technology positions are presently assigned to the department on a full time basis.

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